

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-05 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 AID-05 /084 W

-----086861 060142Z /73

R 041700Z NOV 77

FM AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5489

INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE RIO DE JANEIRO 5222

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, SHUM, BR

SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS: HUNGER STRIKE IN RIO AND PRESS  
COMMENTS

REF: (A) RIO DE JANEIRO 5137; (B) BRASILIA 8969

1. SUMMARY. A HUNGER STRIKE INITIATED BY SIX FEMALE  
POLITICAL PRISONERS SEEKING IMPROVED PRISON CONDITIONS HAS  
SPREAD TO THREE RIO PRISONS AS WELL AS SAO PAULO. RIO'S  
JORNAL DO RABSI HAS EDITORIALY JUSTIFIED ITS POLICY OF  
PUBLICIZING REPORTS OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS CITING  
ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN'S REMARKS IN SANTO DOMINGO  
ON THE CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE OF THE PRESS IN ENHANCING HUMAN  
RIGHTS CONDITIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. THERE HAVE BEEN NO FRESH ACCUSATIONS OF TORTURE OF  
POLITICAL PRISONERS SINCE THOSE REPORTED RIO REFTEL.  
HOWEVER, SIX FEMALE POLITICAL PRISONERS, INCLUDING THREE  
AWAITING TRIAL FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE PRO-MARXIST MOVEMENT  
FOR THE EMANCIPATION OF THE PROLETARIAT (MEP),  
INITIATED A HUNGER STRIKE WHICH IS NOW SOME TWO WEEKS  
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OLD. THE SIX, CURRENTLY HOSPITALIZED, ARE SEEKING TRANS-  
FER FROM THEIR PRESENT JAIL TO ANOTHER WHICH HOUSES MOSTLY  
POLITICAL PRISONERS. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, THE  
HUNGER STRIKE HAS NOW SPREAD TO THREE RIO PRISONS WHERE  
THIRTY SIX POLITICAL PRISONERS HAVE JOINED THE SIX WOMEN  
IN HUNGER STRIKES. THE PRESS ALSO REPORTED THAT ABOUT  
THIRTY POLITICAL PRISONERS IN SAO PAULO HAD JOINED

IN THE STRIKE. IN PERHAPS AN EFFORT TO DEFUSE THE GROWING HUNGER STRIKE, THE AIR FORCE TRIBUNAL, WHICH IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MEP TRIAL, ORDERED THE RELEASE FROM PREVENTIVE DETENTION OF THE THREE WOMEN MEP HUNGER STRIKERS AS WELL AS TWO MALES INVOLVED IN THE MEP CASE. THE THREE REMAINING WOMEN HUNGER STRIKERS WHO CONTINUE UNDER DETENTION HAVE BEEN CONVICTED OF NATIONAL SECURITY LAW VIOLATIONS.

3. THE JORNAL DO BRASIL AND TO A LESSER EXTENT OTHER NATIONAL RIO AND SAO PAULO NEWSPAPERS HAVE CONTINUED TO FOCUS ON THE GENERAL SUBJECT OF HUMAN RIGHTS. IN A LEAD EDITORIAL OCTOBER 29, JORNAL ANALYZED THE PROBLEM OF TORTURE OF BOTH COMMON CRIMINALS AND OF POLITICAL PRISONERS. WITH REFERENCE TO THE LATEST CHARGES OF TORTURE OF POLITICAL DETAINEES, JORNAL STATED: "IT IS NOT JUST TO BELIEVE THAT AN ACCUSED, BECAUSE HE IS AN ACCUSED, ALWAYS LIES. EQUALLY, IT IS NOT JUST TO DENY ALL DENUNCIATIONS (OF TORTURE) BASED EXCLUSIVELY ON A GENERIC CRITERION SUCH AS THE ARGUMENT WHICH THEY ADVANCE--THE REPUDIATION OF CONFESSIONS. EVEN STILL LESS JUST IS TO SUPPOSE THE EXISTENCE OF ANY TYPE OF COMPLICITY BETWEEN THE PRESS WHICH PUBLISHES DENUNCIATIONS AND AN IDEOLOGY, A TACTIC OR THE DESIRES OF THOSE MAKING DENUNCIATIONS. IF THESE DENUNCIATIONS ARE PUBLICIZED ONLY BY A SEGMENT OF THE PRESS, IT IS REGRETTABLE THAT AT THIS MOMENT THE CONCEPT OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE COUNTRY IS SEGMENTED." JORNAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CONTINUED BY RECALLING THE DANGERS TO A STATE INHERENT IN ITS ACQUIESCENCE IN TORTURE AS A POLITICAL POLICY BY CITING FRENCH ACTIONS IN ALGERIA AND THE THREAT WHICH LATER CONFRONTED THE THIRD REPUBLIC. "EXPOSURE AND REPULSION BEFORE TORTURE ARE ATTITUDES RESULTING EXCLUSIVELY FROM THE LEVEL OF A SOCIETY'S CIVILIZATION. IT IS NOT, NOR SHOULD IT BE, UNDER WHATEVER ASPECT, A STRATEGEM TO PERMIT THE WEAKENING OF THE DEFENSE OF THE STATE AND MUCH LESS THE DEMORALIZATION OF ITS AGENTS. TO THE CONTRARY, IT IS PRECISELY TO REMOVE THE SUSPICION OF CRUELTY WHICH CASTS A SHADOW ON NATIONAL SECURITY, BECAUSE THE NATION LOSES WHATEVER DOUBT IN THE NECESSARY SOLIDARITY OWED TO THOSE WHO DEFEND THE NATION.....THE COUNTRY DOES NOT WISH TO USE THE QUESTION OF TORTURE AS A FLAG FOR POLITICAL THEMES. THE COUNTRY ASKS THAT IT BE GIVEN THE CERTAINTY OF BEING FREE OF THIS PRACTICE. NOTHING MORE."

4. ANOTHER LEAD EDITORIAL ON NOVEMBER 3 ENTITLED "HUMAN RIGHTS" REVIEWED ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN'S DISCOURSE BEFORE THE INTER-AMERICAN PRESS ASSOCIATION. THE NEWSPAPER OBSERVED THAT AMBASSADOR TODMAN PROVIDED THE MOST ARTICULATE VERSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY OF PRESIDENT

CARTER YET ENUNCIATED. AFTER SUMMARIZING THE AMBASSADOR'S REMARKS, WITHOUT ANY DISSENTING NOTES, JORNAL FOCUSED ON THE AMBASSADOR'S ANALYSIS OF THE KEY ROLE OF A FREE PRESS IN PRESERVING AND PROMOTING A PROPER VISION OF A FREE SOCIETY TO WHICH ALL MEN HAVE THE RIGHT TO ASPIRE.

5. COMMENT. THE JORNAL DO BRASIL EDITORIALS AND THE OCTOBER 3 ONE IN PARTICULAR SUGGEST THAT THE NEWSPAPER HAS BEEN CRITICIZED BY ELEMENTS IN THE REGIME FOR THE EXTENSIVE COVERAGE THE NEWSPAPER HAS GIVEN TO RECENT ALLEGATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS INVOLVING BOTH THE FIRST AND SECOND ARMIES. THE MILITARY SERVICES ARE ACUTELY SENSITIVE TO MEDIA CRITICISM AS EVIDENCED BY GOB PROSECUTION OF A FOLHA DE SAO PAULO JOURNALIST FOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DEFAMING THE "FATHER" OF THE BRAZILIAN ARMY, THE DUQUE DE CAXIAS (SAO PAULO 2470). WITH REGARD TO THE HUNGER STRIKE, THIS IS A TACTIC NOT UNCOMMONLY USED BY BRAZIL'S POLITICAL PRISONERS TO SEEK IMPROVED LIVING CONDITIONS OR OTHER PRIVILEGES.

6. THIS MESSAGE WAS COORDINATED WITH EMBASSY BRASILIA.  
DEXTER

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## Message Attributes

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